



NEW ROAD MAP FOR CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY WITH THE VALUE OF INCLUSIVENESS: AN INSIGHT FROM NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum is one of the essential components of education. It is a roadmap for educational programs, including curricular and co-curricular activities. The National Education Policy 2020 represents a transformative shift in the field of education, particularly in the realm of inclusive education. As the first policy to explicitly endorse the principles of equity and inclusive education, it holds the potential to reshape our educational landscape significantly. In this paper, the researcher aims to underscore the various recommendations for inclusive education's curriculum and pedagogical development and the diverse curriculum adaptation programs for Children with Special Needs (CwSN), focusing on intellectual disabilities, visual impairment, and hearing impairment. Curriculum adaptation, the process of altering teaching and assessment methods, is crucial to this transformation. Adaptations, which encompass accommodations and modifications, bring about changes in the learning environment, pedagogical strategies, and resources. Modifications specifically refer to changes in content and learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Curriculum, Pedagogy, Value, Inclusiveness, National Education Policy 2020

1.0 INTRODUCTION

“The Curriculum Tells You “What” not “How.” The How is the artistry in Education”- George Couros

The concept of ‘inclusion’ is a pedagogical strategy or a kind of education. In the postmodern era, it is an ideology that is based on the proposition that every person should get their basic rights irrespective of their condition (rich, poor, deprived), belongingness (their religion, caste, creed), gender (female, transgender), disabilities (all kind of disabilities including learning disabilities), or any other context. This ideology's emergence indicates reality because people have always been distinguished on the above grounds. Education is a powerful tool for achieving the socio-economic development of a nation. As you may already know, the four indispensable components of education are teaching, learning, and course content or curriculum and evaluation process. Thus, curriculum is an integral part of the education system. The word curriculum is derived from the Latin “currere,” meaning “to run” or follow. Therefore, curriculum is the way to achieve learning objectives and good learning outcomes. Cunningham believes that “instructions” are the tools at the artist’s disposal to create his material according to his intention in the studio. In this context, teachers are artists, materials are students, goals are different learning objectives, and studios are schools (Adhikari, 2023). Effective pedagogy is the essential component of the curriculum for teachers, students, learning institutions, or schools. The main motto of inclusive education is to secure and guarantee the right of all children to access, participate, present, and succeed in the educational system. Developing a curriculum that includes all learners may well involve broadening the definition of learning used by teachers and decision-makers in the education system. Thus, as long as learning is understood as the acquisition of bodies of knowledge presented by teachers, schools are likely to be locked into rigidly organized curricula and teaching practices. Commonly, therefore, inclusive curricula are based on a view of learning as something that takes place when students are actively involved in making sense of their experiences; learners, in other words, cannot simply be told. Instead, they must discover and understand things themselves (IBE-UNESCO, 2016).

The onset of NEP-2020 is a new benchmark for the overall education system. Since independence is the first immensely explicit policy, Equitable and Inclusive Education also highlights the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SDGs). The main goal of NEP 2020 in curriculum formulation is to integrate the curriculum from early childhood care to higher education. It proposed a ‘light but tight’ regulatory framework



that ensures the educational system's integrity, clearness, and resource efficiency to spur everyone to think divergently and innovatively. According to U-DISE data (2021-2022), 0.85% of students enrolled in schools in India are Children with Special Needs (CwSN). Inclusive curriculum development should be grappled with, including students with special needs. In this view, NEP 2020 proposed extensive use of techno-pedagogic methods in teaching-learning, removing language barriers and increasing access for Divyang students. In this paper, the researcher seeks to highlight the provisions of curriculum and pedagogy in the lenses of the New Education Policy 2020.

2.0 RATIONALE BEHIND THE STUDY

It is necessary to make our society progressive; we require developing our education system to be more holistic and prosperous. Nevertheless, education should be integrated with vital universal human values, embracing the diverse needs of society. NEP 2020 focuses on the comprehensive development of learners and reducing curriculum content to enhance essential learning and enable critical thinking. The main motto of inclusive education is to access, participation, and presence of all learners irrespective of their conditions, belongingness, gender, or disabilities. Therefore, to build an inclusive classroom environment, it is necessary to adopt several curricular and pedagogical strategies that make learning interesting and enjoyable for all.

Inclusive curriculum development should be a continual process that is closely intricate and includes students with special needs. An inclusive curriculum is momentous because it benefits all learners, not just those with disabilities. It can help develop students' empathy and understanding and lead to more inclusive communities. An inclusive curriculum allows diverse content, materials, ideas, and assessment methods. It involves purposefully amalgamating perspectives that enable and enhance the instruction within individual papers and the whole course. It allows students to engage with various outlooks and embellish a diverse global ecosystem.



Fig: 1 Salient feature of Curriculum Proposed by NEP 2020.

3.0 REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH LITERATURE

A review of related literature shows that many studies have been conducted on National Education Policy 2020 and inclusive education. A systematic review conducted on the analysis of NEP 2020 prioritizes equity, quality, and accessibility to remove social disparities and promote equal learning opportunities for all (Panda, 2024). A study was conducted to develop an equitable and inclusive education system. The government should develop infrastructural facilities for schools and higher education (Panigrahi, 2024). The study of the changing dimensions of school curriculum and pedagogy focuses on the holistic development of the learners. New Education Policy 2020 shifts the education system toward real-world understanding and how to learn. The focus of education is not only on the cognitive growth of the learners, but it tries to emphasize the comprehensive development of learners. In this view, curriculum content must focus on critical thinking and empower the students through flexibility in course choices (Adhikari, 2023).

Shukla 2023 et al. studied Roadmap to Inclusive Curriculum: A Step Towards Multidisciplinary Engineering Education for Holistic Development. The study stated that NEP 2020 proposed to reform the nation's existing curriculum framework and emphasized introducing a multidisciplinary undergraduate program with multiple exit options. This study proposes an inclusive curriculum with different course types from multiple



disciplines for an undergraduate engineering program for the comprehensive development of learners. This program would enhance their research abilities and enable them to develop critical thinking skills.

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- I. To discuss the recommendations of National Education Policy 2020 for the curriculum development of inclusive education.
- II. To know the different curriculum adaptation programs for Children with Special Needs (CwSN), with particular reference to children with intellectual disabilities, visual impairment, and hearing impairment.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Nature of the study

The present study is Qualitative and analytical.

5.2 Sources of data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

5.2.1 Primary data

The Primary data consist of the draft of NEP 2020, National Curriculum Framework 2005, and National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023, Manual on Inclusive Education by SCERT, Delhi.

5.2.2 Secondary data

Secondary data has been gathered from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, other writings, websites, etc.

5.3 Analysis of the data

Considering the research objectives, the above documents have been reviewed systematically to interpret the information embedded in them and realize the theme of the paper. An objective analysis has been made here.

6. DISCUSSION

Objective 1: To discuss the recommendations of National Education Policy 2020 for the curriculum development for inclusive education.

Curriculum refers to the “roadmap” or “rudder” of any given discipline. It combines instructional practices, learning experiences, and student performance assessments to achieve a specific learning objective. The elements that constitute and bring to life a curriculum include goals and objectives, syllabi, content to be taught and learned, pedagogical practices, learning environment and culture of the institution, and more (NCFSE 2023). A curriculum is a schematic document stating meaningful experiences that students should take out in various activities, inside and outside the school, to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs. Curriculum development is a continuous and dynamic process that should be adaptable and applicable to different disciplines and situations. Teachers are vital in identifying and designing appropriate curricula for their students. There are several approaches through which a curriculum can be designed and developed. These approaches are generally based on the Subject-centred approach, Broadfields approach, Social Problems approach, and Learner-centred approach. Inclusive education should ensure the participation of each learner, so it becomes essential to make the curriculum accessible. An inclusive curriculum provides experiential learning, which should be innovative and disciplined to tailor pupils productively.

6.1 Curriculum Adaptation

An inclusive classroom embraces each learner’s uniqueness; every learner in an inclusive classroom has access to tools that make learning accessible and meaningful. The changes may be made in content, curriculum transactions, evaluation processes, activities, learning materials, or the teaching-learning ecosystem. Curriculum adaption is the changes teachers make in how they teach or assess. Hence, all learners get an equal opportunity to embark on the concept and attain the specific learning goals. It refers to organizing assessments, materials, curriculum, or classroom environment to accommodate a student’s needs so they can participate in achieving the learning goal. In a few conditions, the curriculum developer needs to make changes for essential accommodations, while in other cases, modifications are required. Accommodation and Adaption are two kinds of curricular adaptation; they enable learners to participate in learning activities.

6.1.1 Some specific features of Curriculum Adaptations

For any adaption to be effective, it must **FLOW**:

- i. **Fit** into the classroom environment.



- ii. **Lend** themselves to meet individual student needs.
- iii. **Optimize** understanding for each student.
- iv. **Work** well with activities planned for the lesson.

Levels of Curriculum Adaptation

There are three levels of Curriculum Adaptation:

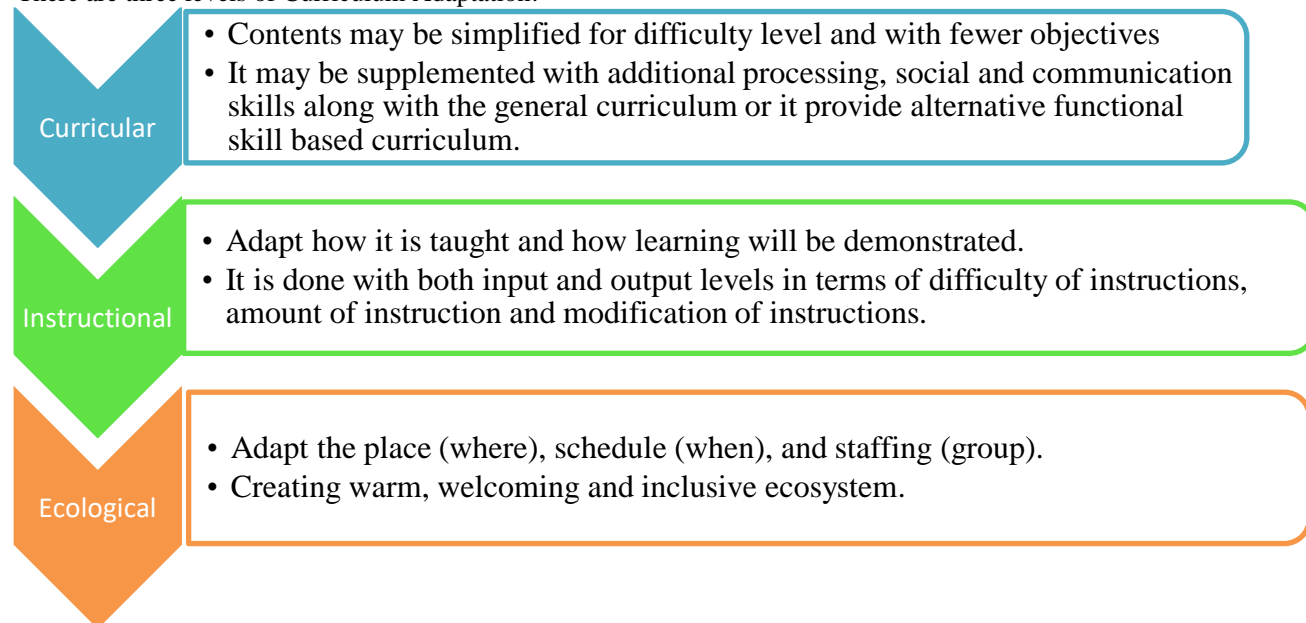


Fig: 2 Levels of Curriculum Adaptation

6.1.2 Accommodations of Curriculum

The term accommodation denotes adjustments made in the material, curriculum, or educational environment to accommodate the student's specific needs and increase their participation in achieving educational goals. It means transmuting the way to provide more possible ways in which children can access or engage with the learning material or task given in the classroom. Accommodation involves changes in the learning environment, pedagogical strategies, resources, etc. The core intention of accommodations is to ensure equity in learning opportunities in the classroom. This means enabling equal access for all students. It also means effectively assisting learning for students with specific learning needs because of disabilities they may have (NCFSE 2023). For curricular and pedagogical modification for disabled learners, NEP 2020 proposed four provisions for curricular and pedagogical accommodation.

(Table: 1)

| Curricular and pedagogical accommodations | Proposed Strategies |
|--|--|
| Illustrative Content Accommodations (ICA) | Use of more enormous fronts for the printed materials with adequate spacing, sharing printouts of summarised notes, using Assistive technologies (e.g., text-to-speech read aloud, speech-to-text software), repeated and reinforced ideas and concepts in the TLM |
| Illustrative Pedagogical Accommodations (IPA) | Universal design in their planning and structure for equitable access allows students to use word processors with/without spellcheck, creating a system of peer support, exceptional educator support, etc. |
| Illustrative Assessment Accommodations (IAA) | This typically involves changing or reorganizing the order of tasks or questions for assessment, making assessment question papers or worksheets with large print for comfortable reading, extending the time for completion, organizing for a scribe/writer or reading assistant, allowing the use of word processing software on a computer, and using a calculator or a tablet. |
| Assistive Devices and Appropriate Technology-based Tools | Adequate and language-appropriate TLMs (e.g., textbooks in accessible formats, such as in large print or Braille) and school activities (including art, sports, and vocational education). |

Source: National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023, P-184



6.1.3 Modifications of Curriculum

The term modification refers to changes in the content taught to the students, that is, ‘what is to be taught’. It referred to the changes made in the learning outcomes, which are generally below the age/ grade level in which the students are placed. A modification leads to the outcome of learning for an individual. The changes may be in the complexity or the number of outcomes. There are two types of modifications. These are:

- a) **Curriculum Modifications:** Changes in teaching-learning resources, materials, tasks, etc.
- b) **Assignment Modifications:** It provides a set of problems or questions or an alternative system of grading, test questions, and assignments that may be projects using digital resources such as making videos, etc.

6.2 Curriculum includes Social Values

The main motto of NEP 2020 is to develop ethical and moral values in learners by integrating value-based learning into the curriculum. The school curriculum includes human values such as respect for all persons, empathy, tolerance, human rights, gender equality, non-violence, global citizenship, inclusion, and equity. India is a nation that promotes diversity, so it is called the “Land of Diversity,” it has an extensive range of cultures, religions, traditions, languages, and ethnicities. It sensitizes and constructs respect for diversity. NEP 2020 stated that relevant and relatable material will be included in the curriculum, which removes any biases and stereotypes in the school curriculum that are relevant to all communities. It includes UNESCO’s mention of 197 Indian languages as ‘endangered’; various unscripted languages are especially in danger of becoming extinct. All these indigenous tribal languages could be included in the school curriculum.

6.3 Integration of Subjects in Curriculum

NEP 2020 proposed integrating the subject and learning areas prescribed by the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023 into their curricula to assuage and eventually eliminate the marginalized children from these schools in higher education. Science, Mathematics, Social studies, Hindi, English, State Languages, or other relevant subjects in the curriculum, as may be described by these schools. Integration of subjects helps a student exhibit a broad understanding of a subject and a deeper understanding of the different components. Students learn to make conjunctions between the different topics they study and can apply the knowledge they have obtained in one area to other areas.

6.4 Curriculum should be free from Stereotypes and Gender Biases

NEP 2020 recommended that the curriculum be free from stereotypes and gender biases because it can help students develop a more inclusive and equitable view of society. Various curricula do not treat male and female learners equally; they represent a stereotypical societal concept. The inquisition for gender inclusivity in the curriculum is a fight for fairness and an essential benchmark for nurturing societies to justice and equality. All background Socio-economically Disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) are represented in a manner that upholds their dignity and empowers them.

6.5 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL is an approach based on the idea that the educational environment, teaching strategies, and resources should be universal to accommodate all children's unique needs easily. In the 1990s, David H. Rose first defined the concept of UDL. Universal Design for Learning focuses on the uniqueness and diverse needs of all learners in the classroom. Technology can bridge gaps and enable independent learning to support the diverse needs of students with disabilities. Technological aids in the form of diverse tools for early detection and intervention will be needed. In addition, specially curretted e-content to address the learning needs of students with disabilities should essentially follow Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, and the end products should be available in audio, video, ISL, and other digital formats such as EPUB, flipbooks, Interactive Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) (NCFSE 2023).

Objective: 2 To know the different curriculum adaptation programs for children with special needs (intellectual disabilities, visual impairment, and hearing impairment).

Children with Special Needs (CwSN) indicate the pupils who need extra assistance and care in the classroom because of their physical, cognitive, emotional, and developmental disorders. This term is significant from a policy perspective as it acknowledges that some children have been excluded from the general educational system because of their physical, mental, and socioeconomic conditions. NEP 2020 mainly focuses on equity and inclusion to ensure all students can access their education system. The government should identify such children, address their needs, and consider them Children with Special Needs. To address the need, the government provides specific provisions to modify the pedagogical approaches at the school level and encourage student engagement in the school environment.



7.0 CURRICULUM ADAPTION FOR STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

According to the 2011 census in India, intellectual disability affects about 2-3% of the general population. Intellectual disability is a condition characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem-solving) and adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills (RPWD Act, 2016). The central and state boards ascertain the primary level of education for uniformity and have prescribed minimum levels of learning (MLL) to be achieved by the pupils. Nevertheless, it is difficult for students with intellectual disabilities to achieve this goal. However, inclusive education is a more favorable mode for them as it develops cognitive, social, and other life skills among them.

7.1 Focusing on functional literacy and numeracy skills: Any content that enhances the probability of their independent functioning should be removed from the subsisting curriculum, and irrelevant content should be discarded. For example, reading and writing their name, their parents, and sibling's names, addresses, the concept of quantity, distance, time, and money, understanding more-less, empty-full, cheap-costly, tall-short, and so on, which helps in performing daily life situations.

7.2 Adapting the method of 'Learning by doing': Learning by doing is a hands-on experience, task-oriented method of learning primarily based on kinaesthetic learning. Students should be provided with many opportunities that engage them actively in hands-on and mind-on experiences. This learning environment should also be focused on creating opportunities for them to succeed, emphasize self-reliance, and promote self-management and self-regulation.

7.3 Step-by-step instructions: Breaking the task into smaller steps and sequencing them as simple to complex, concrete to abstract would facilitate their mastery of learning. For example, to teach number counting, initially, we start with natural objects like objects handled and counted, objects drawn on paper, objects in a cluster, counting moving objects, objects in a line, etc.

7.4 Whole word approach: In this approach, the child is given the whole word, name of the object, and picture to foster flourishing reading and writing skills. Specifically, for writing skills, pupils followed the following steps: Tracing, joining dots, copying, filling in a missing alphabet, filling in two or more missing alphabets, and then abstract words. All these steps are essential for SWID.

8.0 CURRICULUM ADAPTION FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Visual impairment is a condition that emerges due to momentous loss of vision. According to the 2011 census of India mentioned that 19% of disabled people in India had a disability in seeing. RPWD Act 2016, "blindness" means a condition where a person has any of the following conditions after best correction-

- i) total absence of sight; or
- ii) visual acuity less than 3/60 or less than 10/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with the best possible correction; or iii)
- iii) Limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of less than 10 degrees.

"Low-vision" means a condition where a person has any of the following conditions, namely-

- i) Visual acuity not exceeding 6/18 or less than 20/60 up to 3/60 or up to 10/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with best possible corrections; or
- ii) Limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of less than 40 degrees up to 10 degrees.

Students with visual impairment rely more on grasping or their tactile senses to understand the world around them. However, teaching strategies have to be adapted according to their need. It is mentioned that the educational needs of students with low vision differ from those who are blind.

8.1 Pedagogical strategies for students with low vision

8.1.1 Use of appropriate instructions and devices: It was mentioned earlier that the pedagogical needs of students with low vision differ from those of blind students. Students with low vision require magnifying devices or extensive print material, extra input, and time to learn. The teacher's voice should be clear and modulated, and verbal communication needs to be highly effective in class.

8.1.2 Use of large font: We generally write using a particular font size, whether in ink or print. We used a font size of 12, which is not large enough for everybody, especially for children with partial sightedness. The teacher should use the large font in handwritten notes and on the blackboard, which would help the children with partial sightedness and who are sitting away from the blackboard.



8.2 Pedagogical Strategies for blind students

8.2.1 Use of Braille version and audiobooks: The students who are vision-less or blind use Braille, which is made up of raised dots that can be read by touch. Also, the teacher should try to provide classroom notes through audio mode, called audiobooks.

8.2.2 Use of tactile and engraved materials: Teachers should use models, charts, diagrams, graphs, and other tactile or engraved materials so that students with visual impairments can also engage with them by touching and feeling them. These materials were labeled using Braille so pupils could mentally read the text.

8.2.3 Role of the buddy system: The buddy system can assist students with visual impairments. The peer's assistance would help them take notes and participate in curricular and co-curricular activities.

8.2.4 Use of multiple senses: Sense of hearing can help students with visual impairment to develop languages. Using the sense of hearing improves the ability to understand words and interpret speech, which helps to develop linguistic and creative behavior. Likewise, the sense of smell and taste also helps them to associate with the environment. For example, pupils with VI can observe using their sense of smell during traveling or field trips. They can associate a specific place with a particular smell, like the smell of a flower with a garden or the smell of petrichor (earthy scent proceeds when rain falls on dry ground). Sense of taste helps them associate the name of the substances with their taste properties, i.e., the taste of sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami (delicious savory taste). Also, with the help of kinaesthetic sense, they can identify the substance by its size, shape, texture, etc.

9.0 CURRICULUM ADAPTION FOR STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT

As we all know, language is the most excellent tool for communication, but impairment caused by hearing loss hinders language development. According to the 2011 census, 50.72 lakh students were hearing impaired. RPWD Act, 2016 defines hearing impairment-

- a) "Deaf" means persons having 70 DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears:
- b) "Hard of hearing" means a person having 60 DB to 70b DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears.

Students with hearing impairment face difficulties in developing social and cognitive skills. It is essential to organize a school readiness program for children with severe and profound hearing loss, where the focus is on the fullness of the child's development. Auditory training is a process where the child is trained to use their residual hearing ability and exhibit the skills of becoming aware of the sound, gross differentiation between the environmental sounds, and splitting among speech sounds.

9.1 Meaningful interaction among teacher and CWHI students: The teacher would encourage the students with a total communication method (combination of oral and manual methods). For example, we can say that sign language is supplemented with one or more manual communication techniques like sign language, finger spelling, and cued speech should be used. This will help to encourage explicit and capacious communication skills among them.

9.2 Use of audiovisual aids: Teachers need to use various media and technological aids. Extra effort is essential when using a variety of visual aids, such as charts, overhead projectors, videos, pictures, whiteboards, printed materials, etc. When showing videos or movies, the teacher should add subtitles, which students can read to supplement their understanding.

9.3 Use of real-life materials: Teachers should mostly use real-life substances that are concrete objects so they can be touched and experienced. For example, they could use pebbles, sticks, and bubbles for addition and subtraction.

9.4 Clear and short instructions: The teacher should speak very clearly and slowly so that people who are hard of hearing can hear and understand. Pupils should speak in simple, short sentences to hear and hold instructions for further understanding.

**Table: 2 Specific Accommodations and Adaptation for CwSN(Intellectual, Visual, Hearing disabilities)**

| Disabilities | Assistive devices and adaptation | Other adaptation |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Students with intellectual disability | Different concrete objects, pictures, flashcards, and sight words provide real-life examples, a multisensory approach, and mind mapping. | Task analysis, teaching one concept at a time, step-by-step presentation, opportunities to practice, verbal and physical prompts, small group or individual instructions, and repetition of activities. |
| Students with visual impairment | Braille, tactile and engraved materials, smell, taste, and feel model, 3-D objects, raised fonts, tactile graph sheet, verbal description, audio tapes, magnifiers, ABACUS, Braille slates-stylus, etc. | Reduce distracting glare and appropriate lighting, remove dangerous obstacles, eliminate unnecessary noise, and make proper seating arrangements near the teacher's desk. |
| Students with hearing impairment | Sign language, fingerspelling, cued speech, use of pictures and sight words, mind mapping, real objects and experiences, amplification devices, visual supplements, whiteboards, charts, vocabulary lists, etc. | Enhance the classroom environment for speech reading by providing extra time to practice and process information, rephrase and repeat information, paraphrase, give step-by-step directions, and frequently check to understand. |

Source: Manual on Inclusive Education by SCERT, Delhi, 2022

10. CONCLUSION

It is apparent from the above discussion and insight that the curriculum can be perceived as the runway for achieving educational goals. The rudiments of NEP 2020 tie the gap between previous policies and programs in the case of inclusive education, which is praiseworthy. This is the first policy in the 21st century that clears the idea of inclusive education. This policy also clears the role of curriculum, teachers, schools, and stakeholders in building an inclusive society. The appropriate curriculum adaption, as well as appropriate teaching strategies, will help students to excel as eligible citizens of a nation. So, NEP 2020 provides a momentous maxim to our future citizens that they will live full of harmony and social co-existence.

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